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DARK WOLVERINE

Decades ago, the mutant known as Wolverine found peace in Japan, and had a son with his wife, Itsu Akihiro. The peace was short-lived—Itsu was murdered and Wolverine believed his son died with her... but the boy lived.

Like his father, the son possessed enhanced senses, a powerful healing factor, and razor-sharp claws on each hand. As he grew, he blamed his father for his mother's death, and this resentment consumed him. He became known by the name he was taunted with as a child: the Japanese term for "mongrel," Daken.

In recent months, Norman Osborn, the former costumed villain known as the Green Goblin but now called the Iron Patriot, has become the head of the U.S. government's espionage strike-team, H.A.M.M.E.R., as well as the leader of its super hero team, the Avengers. Osborn populates the Avengers with powered beings Osborn feels he can trust—such as the Sentry and Ares—and a host of super villains posing as established heroes—Bullseye as Hawkeye, Venom as Spider-Man, Marvel Boy as Captain Marvel, Moonstone as Ms. Marvel...and Daken as a dark Wolverine.

Daken proves to be just as devious as Osborn and has carefully orchestrated a conflict between the Fantastic Four and Osborn by shooting the Human Torch in the leg with one of Bullseye's arrows. Daken, feigning innocence, visits the FF at the Baxter Building and creates a shaky alliance with a skeptical Reed Richards, but all Daken needs is an inch to dig his claws in.

Bullseye, however, is determined to get even and has been secretly videotaping Daken's exchange with the FF. But when Bullseye realizes that Osborn is following him, he confronts Norman regarding Daken's deceit...just as Ben Grimm tosses Daken out of the window of the Baxter Building. A gleeful Osborn may not be able to trust two members of his Avengers team, but couldn't be happier to have a videotape of Grimm assaulting his Wolverine...

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DARK WOLVERINE (ISSN #1948-7207) No. 77, October, 2009. Published Monthly except semi-monthly in July by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. © 2009 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032852) in the direct market and $3.99 per copy in the U.S. and $3.99 in Canada (GST #R127032852) through the newsstand. Canadian Agreement #40668537. Printed in the USA. Subscription rate (U.S. dollars) for 12 issues: U.S. $27.00; Canada $37.00; Foreign $39.00. POSTMASTER: SEND ALL ADDRESS CHANGES TO DARK WOLVERINE, C/O MARVEL SUBSCRIPTION DEPT. P.O. BOX 110 NEWBURGH, NY 12550. TELEPHONE # (800) 217-9158. FAX # (845) 457-5029. subscriptions@marvelsubs.com. ALAN FINE, EVP - Office Of The Chief Executive Marvel Entertainment, Inc. & CMO Marvel Characters B.V.; DAN BUCKLEY, Chief Executive Officer and Publisher - Print, Animation & Digital Media; JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Talent Management; MICHAEL PASCUILLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM O'KEEFE, VP of Operations & Logistics; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; ALEX MORALES, Publishing Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Mitch Dane, Advertising Director, at mdane@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.

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THERE IS LITTLE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OBSTACLE AND OPPORTUNITY.
ENTREPRENEURS UNDERSTAND THAT...
OPRAH
OH, YEAH...
...AND ARE ABLE TO TURN BOTH TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.
...I AM REALLY FEELIN' THE BURN.
YOU ARE AN IDIOT, DAKEN.
I HATE IDIOTS.
I KILL IDIOTS.
YOU'RE SUCH AN ANIMAL.
BUT THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU.

YOU KNOW WHAT I DON'T LIKE?
NO.
NOR DO I CARE.
YES YOU DO. I'M MAKING SURE THAT YOU DO.
I DON'T LIKE HOW YOU'VE SUBJUGATED YOURSELF.
YOU DO KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?
IT MEANS THAT YOU'VE BEEN MARGINALIZED.
I COULD DO THIS WITHOUT MY MUTANT POWERS--BUT IT WOULD TAKE LONGER.
TIME, UNFORTUNATELY, IS NOT ON MY SIDE.
ENSLAVED.
I NEED YOU NOW.
BUT NOT THIS YOU.
TO A LESSER MAN.
I NEED THE OTHER YOU.
THE ONE THAT WOULD SHED A GALLON OF HIS OWN BLOOD FOR JUST A TASTE OF HIS ENEMY'S.
THE ONE THAT CAN SHAKE THE EARTH...

ENOUGH OF THIS--I AM ARES!
I AM A GOD!
YOU'RE AN EMPLOYEE.
AND YOU'LL REMAIN JUST THAT...
HRRRAAAAAHH!
...UNTIL YOU SHOW OSBORN WHAT YOU REALLY ARE.
I'LL CRUSH HIM!
NO. YOU WON'T. BECAUSE IF YOU EVEN TRY...
...HE'LL GO AFTER YOUR SON.
THEN... HOW...?
THE OTHER NIGHT, AT THE PARTY. THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
THEY MADE YOU LOOK WEAK. THEY MADE ALL OF US LOOK WEAK... BUT YOU, MOST OF ALL.
THEY'RE HERE, YOU KNOW.
RIGHT NOW.
THEY'VE ALL FORGOTTEN WHO YOU ARE, ARES.
MAKE THEM REMEMBER.

STRIKE OUT WITH ARES?
I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THAT I'M COMPLETELY MISUNDERSTOOD.
I UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE A TOTAL PERV.
ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
SO.
YEAH?

AH, THE FANTASTIC FOUR. YOU KNOW, I HAD A VERY PLEASANT DREAM ABOUT THIS THE OTHER NIGHT.
I HOPE TO GOD YOU WEREN'T NAKED.
NO, JOHNNY...
...WELL, NOT WITH YOU, ANYWAY.
DON'T MAKE ME VOMIT.
ENOUGH. YOU GAVE US AN ULTIMATUM. COME HERE OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.
WHAT DO YOU WANT, OSBORN?
JUST THIS.
SHARK

SO WHAT? NOT THE FIRST TIME ANYONE'S SEEN ME BEATING SOME PUNK.
BESIDES, HE WAS TRESPASSING.
HE IS AN AGENT OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND ATTACKING HIM IS A FEDERAL OFFENSE.
YOU WOULD KNOW THAT IF YOU HAD AN OUNCE OF SENSE. THEN AGAIN, I'M CONVINCED REED SURROUNDS HIMSELF WITH IDIOTS, SIMPLY TO MAKE HIMSELF FEEL SMARTER.
NO OFFENSE.
SHARK
IF YOU WERE GOING TO THREATEN AND INSULT US, A SIMPLE PHONE CALL WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT.
OH MY, NO. A PHONE CALL IS A COURTESY GIVEN TO FRIENDS AND ALLIES, SUE.
I WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER THAN TO HAVE YOUR MR. GRIMM ARRESTED AND PUBLICLY FLOGGED IN THE MEDIA. MAKE YOU ALL TWIST IN THE WIND. TEAR YOU DOWN A NOTCH. YOU DESERVE IT.
BUT I'M A GENTLEMAN.
AND I'M WILLING TO CUT A DEAL.
I WANT FULL ACCESS TO YOUR FACILITY. ALL YOUR FILES, PLANS... WHATEVER I WANT. AND YOU WILL NOT INTERFERE, IN ANY WAY, WITH ANYTHING I DO. EVER.
SCREW THAT. I'D RATHER TO GO TO JAIL.
YOU'VE NAMED A PRICE THAT DOESN'T FIT THE CRIME, OSBORN. WHY WOULD YOU EVER THINK WE'D AGREE TO THOSE TERMS?
I DIDN'T.
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE.

EITHER WAY IS COOL
CAUSE THE ONLY PERSON ANSWER TO IS ME
I'M NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU ALL THINK
WHEN IT COMES TO MUSIC I'LL TRY ANYTHING
LIKE IT OR DON'T DOESN'T MATTER TO ME!
I'VE GOT BIGGER THINGS ON MY MIND
BUT GETTING HIGH IS NOT MY THING
I GOT MIND OPENERS
CRAZY IDEAS
5 FT 10 AND A WHOLE LOTTA ATTITUDE
LIKE ME OR DON'T

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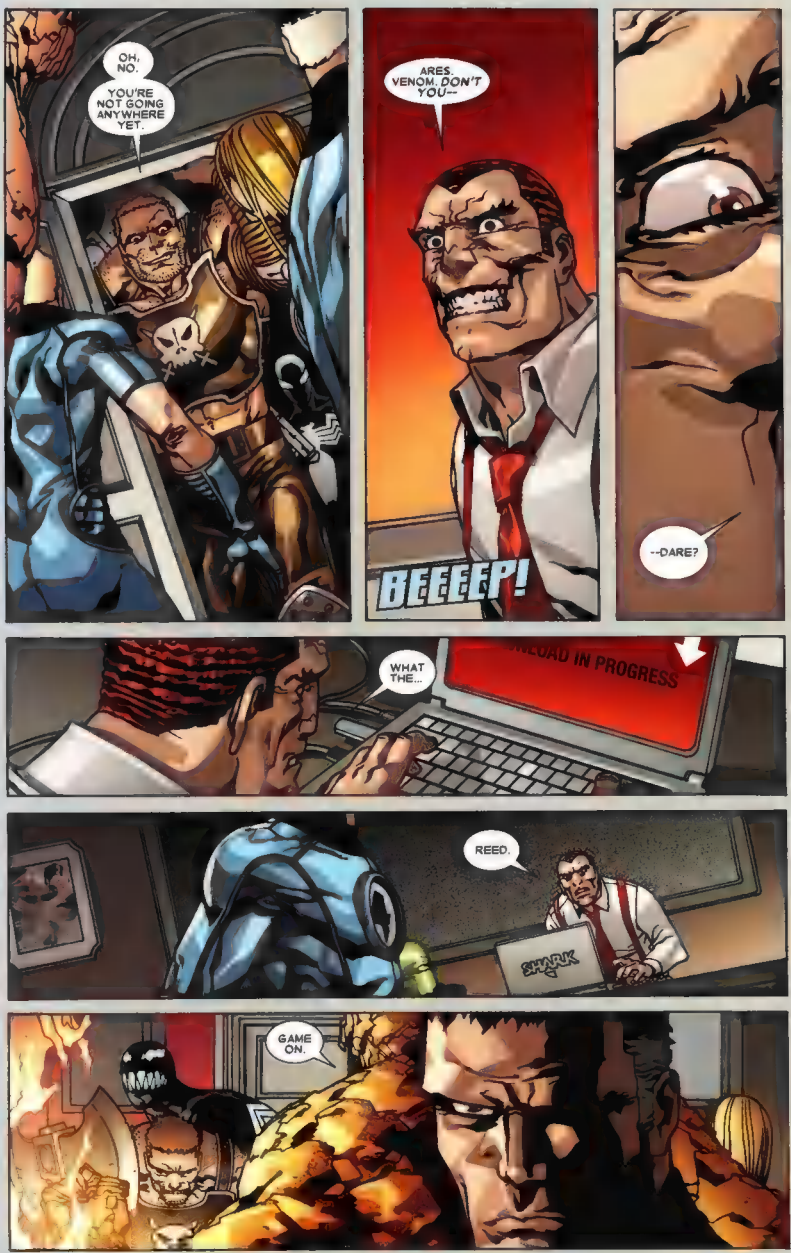
ONE OF MY REPRESENTATIVES IS PREPARING A *PRESS CONFERENCE*. MAJOR NEWS OUTLETS HAVE ALREADY BEEN CALLED. FIFTEEN MINUTES FROM NOW--UNLESS I SAY DIFFERENTLY--THE WHOLE *WORLD* WILL SEE THIS TAPE.
THAT--COMBINED WITH MY ASSERTION THAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY UNDER INVESTIGATION BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT--WILL MAKE QUITE A SPIN.
DON'T YOU THINK?
EMPTY THREATS, OSBORN.
NO. I'LL HAVE PROBABLE CAUSE TO HAVE YOU ALL ARRESTED. BY NIGHTFALL, YOUR CHILDREN WILL BE TAKEN FROM YOU. EVEN IF THIS ALL BLOWS OVER--AND I'LL MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T--YOU'LL NEVER GET THEM BACK. NOT UNLESS YOU *REALLY* WANT TO BECOME FUGITIVES.
AND YOU CAN'T *IMAGINE* THE PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO RAISE THEM.
YOU SICK MONSTER.
YES.
BUT I THINK WE HAVE A DEAL...

PREVIOUS AFTERNOON
...IF YOU'LL HAVE ME.
NO DEAL. NOT UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING FOR US.
AH, AND HERE I THOUGHT ACTION BASED ON THE SIMPLE GOODNESS OF A MAN'S HEART WAS ALL BUT EXTINCT.
LIFE ISN'T THAT SIMPLE ANYMORE.
WAS IT EVER?
IF OSBORN IS SETTING US UP FOR A PUBLIC TAKE-DOWN, THEN WE NEED AN APPROPRIATE COUNTERMEASURE. SOMETHING TO HANG OVER HIS HEAD.
NO.
YOU WANT MORE THAN THAT.
YOU WANT TO EXPOSE HIM. DESTROY HIM. YOU WANT THE PUBLIC TO BURN HIM IN EFFIGY.
WHICH IS WHAT HE FEARS MOST.

WE ALWAYS KNEW THAT NORMAN WOULD SUBVERT THE AVENGERS. USE THEM AS A COVER.
WHAT WE COULDN'T BELIEVE WAS THAT IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED. THAT PEOPLE COULD BE SO BLIND.
TRUSTING ALL THAT MEDIA [redacted], BUNCH OF IDIOTS.
PEOPLE BELIEVE WHAT THEY WANT TO.
UNTIL SOMETHING HAPPENS TO MAKE THEM STOP.
WE NEED ACCESS TO HIS FILES, PLANS, EVERYTHING. WE WANT TO KNOW EVERY DIRTY SECRET
THAT WILL BE *VERY* DIRTY, [redacted]. I HOPE YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPACE ON YOUR HARD DRIVE AND A STRONG STOMACH.
YOU'LL ALSO HAVE TO BE ONSITE. OSBORN'S COMPUTERS CAN ONLY BE ACCESSED BY *HIM*.
I'M AWARE OF THAT. I HAVE SOMETHING THAT SHOULD ALLOW ME INTO HIS NETWORK, BUT I'D HAVE TO BE WITHIN A FEW FEET OF OSBORN'S PERSONAL COMPUTER.

NO DEAL, OSBORN. NOT NOW. NOT EVER.
WE DON'T PLAY WITH TERRORISTS.
REED!
YOU WALK AWAY FROM ME AND YOU BETTER BE PREPARED FOR THE CONSEQUENCES.
TRY IT, NORMAN. WE'LL DESTROY YOU.
WE MIGHT JUST DO THAT ANYWAY.


OH, NO.
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE YET.
ARES. VENOM. DON'T YOU--
BEEEEP!
--DARE?
WHAT THE...
REED.
GAME ON.

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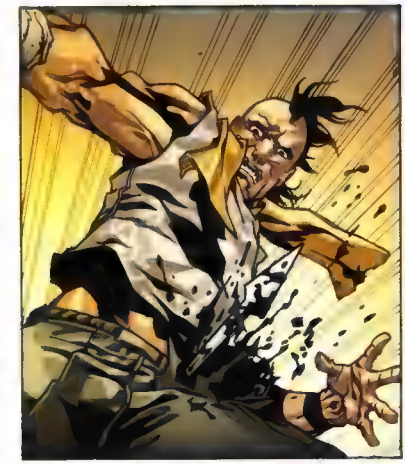
HEY.



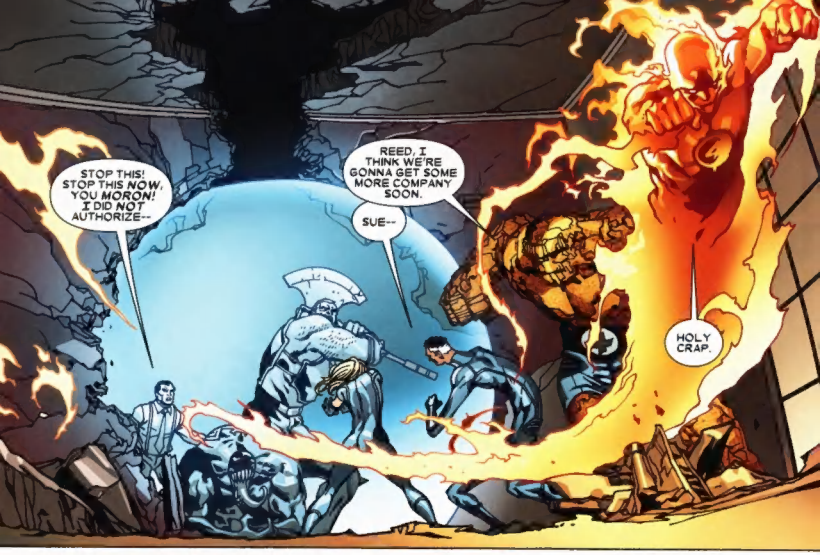
WELL, NOW. HERE'S A SIGHT.

WHAT D'YOU GOT TO SAY NOW?
FE... UNGH.

WHAT WAS THAT?
FE...EL$...
...$UH...

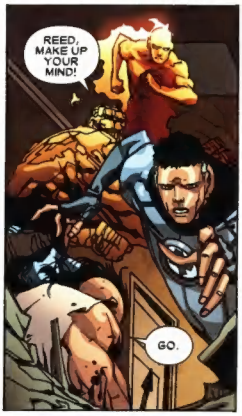
...GOOD...

WHATEVER, YOU SON OF A BITCH.
ARGH!
SQUIRRELING AROUND THIS JOINT LIKE YOU *OWN* IT. ALWAYS WITH THAT BIG, FAT, GRIN ON YOUR FACE.
I HATE THAT SMILE.
I *HATE* IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE UP TO, BUT IT ENDS NOW.
THAT ARROW IS TIPPED WITH AN EXPLOSIVE. NOTHING *BIG*. JUST ENOUGH.
WHEN YOU WAKE UP I GOT ALL *KINDS* OF OTHER WAYS TO KILL YOU. AND I'M GONNA TAKE MY GOOD, SWEET TIME.


STOP THIS! STOP THIS NOW, YOU MORON! I DID NOT AUTHORIZE--
REED, I THINK WE'RE GONNA GET SOME MORE COMPANY SOON.
SUE--
HOLY CRAP.

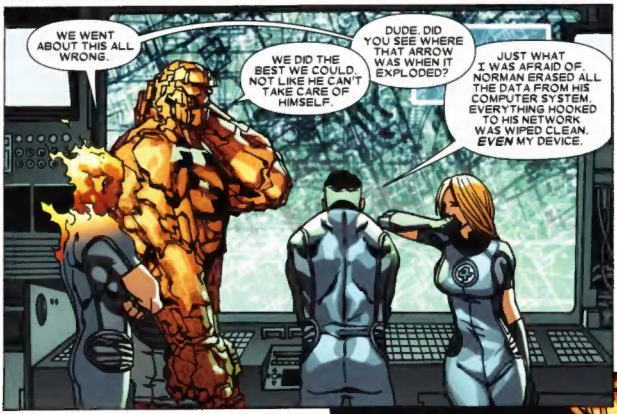
AW, MAN.
...REED...

YOU'VE BEEN TORTURED.
FORGET IT...
NO. WE'RE GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE.
NO TIME.
WHAT YOU GOT...IS MORE IMPORTANT...
REED!
NOTHING WILL HAPPEN... TO ME.
I'M HIS PET... WOLVERINE.


REED, MAKE UP YOUR MIND!
GO.

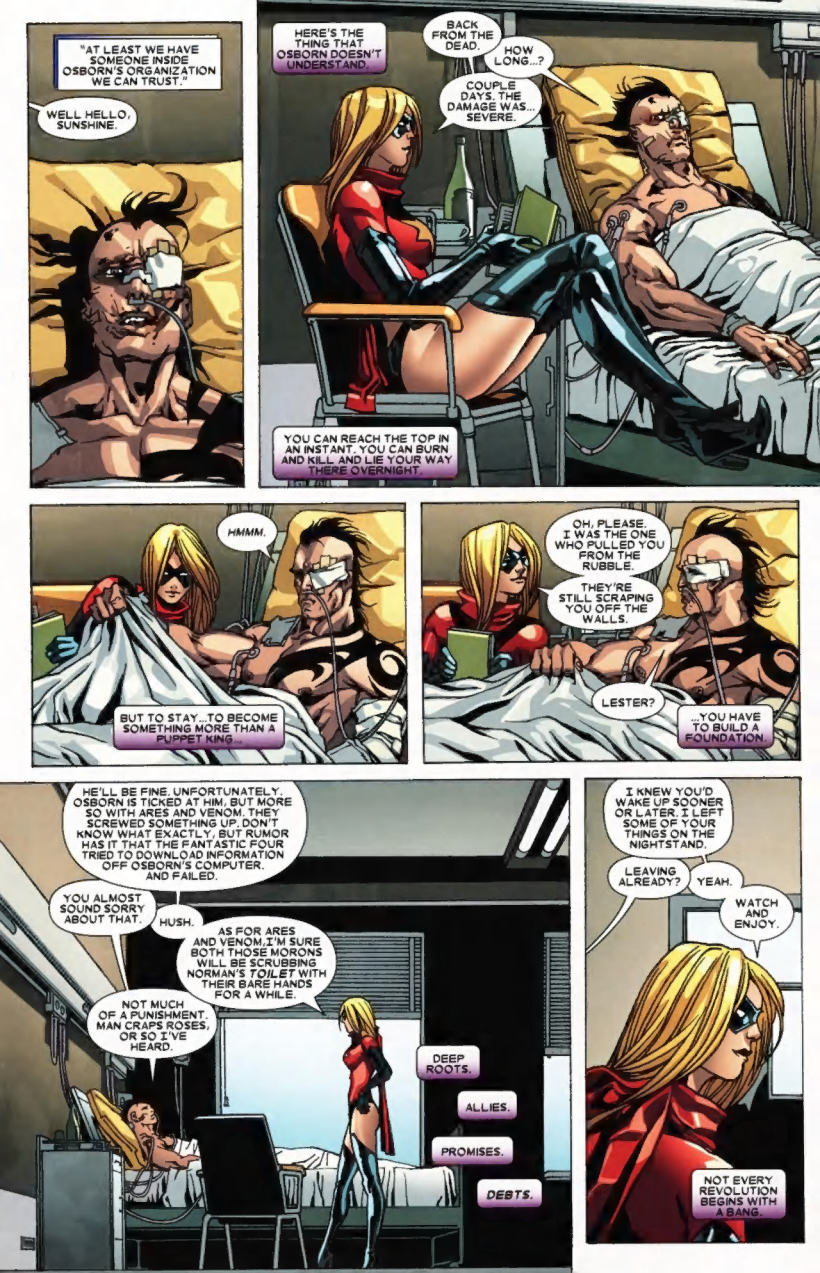
EXPECT THE BEST, PLAN FOR THE WORST...
...PREPARE TO BE SURPRISED.

YES?
NO, LET THEM GO, AND TELL MS. MCGILL TO CANCEL THE PRESS CONFERENCE. SCRAP IT ALL. WE'VE HAD A CHANGE OF PLANS.


WE WENT ABOUT THIS ALL WRONG.
WE DID THE BEST WE COULD. NOT LIKE HE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF.
DUDE. DID YOU SEE WHERE THAT ARROW WAS WHEN IT EXPLODED?
JUST WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF. NORMAN ERASED ALL THE DATA FROM HIS COMPUTER SYSTEM. EVERYTHING HOOKED TO HIS NETWORK WAS WIPED CLEAN. *EVEN* MY DEVICE.

YOU CAN TALK SCIENCE AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
THAT'S WHY DAKEN SACRIFICED HIMSELF.
THINK WE HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT JAIL?
NO PRESS CONFERENCE ON TELEVISION. NOTHING ON THE NEWS.
MY GUESS? THAT VIDEO OF YOU WASN'T SAVED TO ANY OF NORMAN'S OFF-SITE DATA STORAGE UNITS.
SO, STALEMATE. BOTH OF US LOST.

THAT DOESN'T HELP *DAKEN*. WE PROMISED TO HELP HIM.
AND WE'LL KEEP OUR PROMISE. SOMEHOW.
IN THE MEANTIME...


"AT LEAST WE HAVE SOMEONE INSIDE OSBORN'S ORGANIZATION WE CAN TRUST."
WELL HELLO, SUNSHINE.
HERE'S THE THING THAT OSBORN DOESN'T UNDERSTAND.
BACK FROM THE DEAD.
HOW LONG...?
COUPLE DAYS. THE DAMAGE WAS... SEVERE.
YOU CAN REACH THE TOP IN AN INSTANT. YOU CAN BURN AND KILL AND LIE YOUR WAY THERE OVERNIGHT.
HMMM.
BUT TO STAY...TO BECOME SOMETHING MORE THAN A PUPPET KING...
OH, PLEASE. I WAS THE ONE WHO PULLED YOU FROM THE RUBBLE.
THEY'RE STILL SCRAPING YOU OFF THE WALLS.
LESTER?
...YOU HAVE TO BUILD A FOUNDATION.
HE'LL BE FINE. UNFORTUNATELY. OSBORN IS TICKED AT HIM, BUT MORE SO WITH ARES AND VENOM. THEY SCREWED SOMETHING UP. DON'T KNOW WHAT EXACTLY, BUT RUMOR HAS IT THAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR TRIED TO DOWNLOAD INFORMATION OFF OSBORN'S COMPUTER. AND FAILED.
YOU ALMOST SOUND SORRY ABOUT THAT.
HUSH.
AS FOR ARES AND VENOM, I'M SURE BOTH THOSE MORONS WILL BE SCRUBBING NORMAN'S TOILET WITH THEIR BARE HANDS FOR A WHILE.
NOT MUCH OF A PUNISHMENT. MAN CRAPS ROSES, OR SO I'VE HEARD.
DEEP ROOTS.
ALLIES.
PROMISES.
DEBTS.
I KNEW YOU'D WAKE UP SOONER OR LATER. I LEFT SOME OF YOUR THINGS ON THE NIGHTSTAND.
LEAVING ALREADY?
YEAH.
WATCH AND ENJOY.
NOT EVERY REVOLUTION BEGINS WITH A BANG.

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